

Be Faithful and Attentive* — Book One

Chapter 14:

Ending Your Day in the Divine Will

"How beautiful it is to see one of our creatures rest in the arms of our Will! But to find true repose it is necessary that one start placing all his acts, his words, his love, his pleasures, etc., in our Volition so that, as they take their place in It, they receive rest; and I repose in them."

(Vol. 14: September 11, 1922)

Ending Your Day in the Divine Will

When you awoke, you immediately made the Prevenient Act with your first rounds in order to put your entire day in the Divine Will. Now, before taking your sleep, you will want to put your entire night in the Divine Will. First, however, it will be necessary to review the day in order to take note of your failures and beg pardon for them, and to thank God for every blessing.

1. The Examination of Conscience, Acts of Contrition and Gratitude

At the close of the day you must always include the Examination of Conscience and the Act of Contrition. Just as with the morning meditation (discussed in Chapter 4, No. 2), the Saints of old all agree that these "must never be omitted!" For the saints of the "New and Divine Holiness" this exercise will also be of manifest importance. Bl. Dina, throughout her autobiography, gives us frequent, detailed accounts of how diligently she used this practice (twice a day) on her spiritual journey — a journey which led her to experience the extraordinary grace of the Divine Substitution of Jesus in her soul.[1] With this practice, she was able to systematically discover where she was failing (even in the smallest things) in her love for her Beloved, and thus work to improve. Here, then, we see its great value.

As with everything else, be sure to perform these acts in the Divine Will. Do them in the name of everyone to give God the glory of all creatures faithfully performing this duty each day, and to make reparation for those who do not.

Begin by placing yourself before the Holy Trinity, Whose All-seeingness penetrates all your actions and sees the true intention for which they were done. Ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten you with this truth. Then, in your mind, recall all the events of the day. Think of the activities you have been involved in and the people you've encountered. Consider whether you have given in to your particular weaknesses and to your predominant fault. Examine yourself more carefully on your faithfulness to your life in the Divine Will. How have you failed? Consideration of the following points may be helpful:

An Examination of Conscience for Life in the Divine Will

NOTE: Always pay special attention to deliberate sins, however slight they may seem. All such sins must be completely overcome in order to become one with the Will of God: "...do you know who it is that places disorder into the soul? Sin alone, even the slightest, if the soul commits it voluntarily and attaches herself to it. Oh, how all this deforms the soul, it removes her colour, it debilitates her!" (Vol. 9: Nov. 16, 1909).

— How well did I make my Examination of Conscience and Act of Contrition last night? Did I omit either one? Did I remember to thank God for the blessings of the day?

— Did I make my "Prevenient Act" upon awaking in order to set my whole day in order in the Divine Will? Did I rise promptly at the appointed time? Did I keep in mind the Church's teaching on modesty when dressing, which is the outward mark of a true Child of the Divine Will? Or did I compromise for the sake of vanity, comfort or convenience?

— Was I negligent in making "Current Acts" during the day (through my own fault)?

— What efforts did I make to keep the Divine Attitude throughout the day? Did I do everything for Jesus, that is, with a desire to truly please Him? Did I do everything in Jesus, leaving my "own thoughts," "style," "tastes and even more" (Vol. 3: Jul. 10, 1900), to take up His? How many times did I do my will? What effort did I make to remain in continual prayer which enables me to partake in the "ad intra operations that the Divinity wrought in Jesus' Humanity"? (Vol. 4: Jul. 28, 1902).

— How well did I make my Morning Meditation? Did I omit it?

— If I went to Holy Mass or made a visit, did I show proper reverence in the House of God? Did I speak unnecessarily or distract others? — How attentive was I at Holy Mass? Did I offer myself as victim with Jesus?

— Did I make proper preparation for the great act of receiving Holy Communion? Did I spend the proper time after Holy Communion keeping Jesus company, or did I

make excuses to cut this time short? Did I receive Communion in the Divine Will and in some manner perform those acts Jesus recommended to Luisa for receiving the Holy Eucharist?

— Was I faithful to my prayer resolutions? Did I pray my "Rounds," Hours of the Passion and Rosary as I should? Did I pray with attention and proper posture? Did I spend time reading and meditating on the Book of Heaven? Did I make resolutions as the fruit of my meditation? And did I keep them?

— Did I attribute any and all good that I accomplished as coming from God? Or, rather, did I attribute it to myself who have "nothing of my own except pure nothingness and the inclination to evil" (Vol. 1: Ch. 14).

— Did I practice the virtues necessary for living in the Divine Will: Humility, Abandonment / Resignation, Obedience, Purity of Intention, etc.? (See The Ten Necessary Virtues listed in Chapter 2).

— Did I accept everything that happened as the Will of God for me? Was this evident by my remaining in that peace so necessary for Jesus to live in me? (See Peace is a Sign in Chapter 1). Was I worried about my own spiritual progress, or was I self-forgetful with a concern only of pleasing Jesus?

— Did I see the image of God in every creature and treat them accordingly? Did I accept all that creatures did to me (good or evil) as coming from God for my benefit? Did I keep my heart on my Jesus, my Treasure within, or did it become entangled with affections for creatures?

— Did my heart become too absorbed in the pleasures of material things, of amusements, or of food and drink?

— Did I take time to reflect on the Passion of my Jesus? Did I use the different encounters of the day as occasions to bring love, reparation and relief to Him? Jesus suffers immensely from human ingratitude. Did I thank Him often for myself and for everyone?

— Other personal reflections: (i.e. What efforts have I made to overcome my particular weaknesses and my predominant fault?)

Jot down your shortcomings each night and keep them for your next Confession. It is not necessary to review every detail of the above examination each night. Once you are a little familiar with the list you will find there are certain areas that need your particular attention. These you will want to focus on each night so as to work for improvement. Then, periodically, you will want to review the whole examination to see what other areas need to be worked on.

Sorrow for your Faults and Offenses

Now, after having examined your conscience, think for a moment of the sorrows and pains your infidelities have caused your Jesus, whose love for you never ceases. Thinking of his Passion will help you to be sorry even for your seemingly lesser faults for which He also suffered: "...keep the light of my Passion ever before your mind ... Then, considering the cause for which I suffered so many immense pains, which was sin, your littlest defects will seem grave to you." (Vol. 2: Sept. 2, 1899). Be aware, too, that, having received the immense Gift of the Divine Will, you have more reason than others to be sorry for your lesser faults, for: "...unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required" (Lk. 12:48). Then with true sorrow, make a good Act of Contrition, resolving to make new efforts to improve.

Make your Act of Contrition in the Divine Will

My Jesus, as I sincerely beg pardon for my faults, I do so in your Holy Will, to beg pardon in the name of all creatures for all sins, to redo all acts of contrition in the Divine Will, and to call all souls to acknowledge their sins and beg pardon for them. In me I want You to find all souls begging pardon for their sins with perfect contrition. With this in mind I pray:

Luisa's Act of Contrition (From the Divine Will Prayer Book)

My Jesus, forgive me. I dared to offend You and to turn myself against You in the same instant in which You loved me. Jesus, I repent with all my heart for having offended You; but I see that my pain is neither sufficient nor proportionate to the gravity of my sins. Therefore, I pray You, I supplicate You to grant me your affliction, so that I may be sorry with the same sorrow with which You were sorry for my sins, sorrow that was so great and intense as to make You sweat living Blood in the Garden of Olives.

Heavenly Mother, obtain for me from your Jesus and mine, the longed-for forgiveness. I resolve and I promise in the most energetic and absolute way [with the help of your grace and the strength of your Will] to never sin again. Amen.

— OR —

Traditional Act of Contrition (Recommended with Confession)

O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because I dread the loss of Heaven and I fear the pains of Hell, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, Who art all-good and deserving of all my

love. Henceforth, with the help of Thy grace, I promise to do penance, to amend my life, to avoid sin and the near occasions of sin. Amen.

The Acts of Gratitude

"Gratitude is the key that opens the divine treasures" (Vol. 5: June 6, 1903).

At this time call to mind all the good you received in various forms throughout the day: corporal goods as well as spiritual, joys as well as crosses. Recall, too, any good you may have accomplished. Remember your nothingness, and be aware that in any good that you did, it was God who gave you that good to do as well as the desire and ability to do it. Give Him thanks and praise for all, while ever humbling yourself before Him. Jesus says:

Always remember that I generously pour out my graces, even in torrents, into those souls that know themselves, as long as they remember that each thing they did was done thanks to my grace, and do not claim anything for themselves; and as long as they appreciate them as they should and are not only grateful to Me, but live in the continual fear of losing every grace, gift and favor if they do not correspond to Me. I cannot enter into hearts that stink with pride because, being so filled with themselves, these souls do not have even a little place in their heart to put Me, and because they do not have any esteem at all for my graces (Vol. 1: Chapter 6).

Above all, thank Him for the immense Gift of the Divine Will and for every act you had the happiness of performing in It. Then, be sure to make these acts of gratitude in the Divine Will in order to make them for those who fail to thank Him. And, in his Will, run to every soul, in all times and places, and call them to give thanks to the Lord.

2. Other Recommended Evening Prayers

Prayer for Daily Neglects (Adapted for the Divine Will)

Eternal Father, through the Heart of Mary and in your Spirit of Love, I offer You, as mine, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, with all Its Love, all Its Sufferings, and all Its Merits.

1st: To expiate all the sins I've committed this day and during all my life, and all the sins committed throughout the world throughout time.

Glory be....

2nd: To purify the good I've done poorly this day and during all my life, and all the good done poorly throughout time. Glory be....

3rd: To supply for the good I ought to have done, and that I have neglected this day and during all my life, and all the good that's been neglected throughout time — especially the neglected good of not living and acting in the Divine Will. Glory be....

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Thanking Jesus and Mary for the Day's Cross

Sweet Mother Mary, I give You back the cross You gave to me from Jesus with so much love this morning. Please cover it with your merits and His, and make it more pleasing to Him than it would have been if I had carried it most faithfully all day long.

My Jesus, in this manner I give You back the cross, thanking You for it. Please prepare for me a new cross for tomorrow, with the greatest graces — the greatest graces Lord! — to carry it with love, most faithfully, all day long.

†...†...†

Preparation for Holy Communion for the Morrow[2]

If you have the happiness of receiving Holy Communion tomorrow, remember that now is the time to begin your preparation. You may find the following aspirations useful:

— The Lord is with Thee, O most Holy Virgin. By your ardent longing You drew Him down from Heaven into your Heart. Instill also in my heart your ardent longing and an insatiable hunger for Jesus, so that I can truly say to Him, "Come, O my Jesus, I long for You with the Heart of Mary, your Mother and mine."[3]

— Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, on fire with love for us, inflame our hearts with love for You (Prayer taught by Our Lord to Blessed Dina Bélanger).

— My sweet Jesus, in your Divine Will, I make my own your ineffable burning desire to give Yourself to me in Holy Communion, and I offer it to You as my desire to receive You! O how I await You! "Lord, hurry, because I cannot go without receiving You. Speed up the hours, let the sun rise now, for my heart swoons with immense desire for Holy Communion..." (Vol. 1: Chapter 11).

Or, prepare yourself for Holy Communion with aspirations from the "poverty of your heart," prayers which most please Our Lord.[4]

These loving aspirations you may wish to repeat after you lie down while drifting off to sleep.

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Prayer to Die in the Divine Will
(From the Divine Will Prayer Book)

My sweet Jesus, I want to die in your Will. I unite my agony to Yours; and may your Agony be my strength, my defense, my light and the sweet smile of your forgiveness. I place my last breath into the last breath that You gave for me upon the Cross in order that I may present myself before You with the merits of your own death.

Ah, my Jesus, open Heaven to me and come to meet me, to receive me with that love with which the Father received You when You exhaled your last breath upon the Cross. Then in your arms, bring me in and I will kiss You and will delight in You eternally.

My Mother, Angels and Saints, come to assist me as You assisted at Jesus' death. Help me; defend me and bear me into Heaven. Amen.

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3. Putting Your Entire Night in the Divine Will

Prayer to Sleep in God's Will
(First paragraph taken from the Divine Will Prayer Book)

My Jesus, I sleep with You to give the glory to the Father that You gave Him for those that do not rest in You; and, while I sleep together with You, I call all souls to rest in your Heart. I intend in my sleep to make my rounds for all the hearts of creatures to put sin to flight and give your true rest to everyone. And You, oh my Jesus, do not permit that my poor soul may find any other rest, if not in your Heart and in your Will. Amen.

Mother Mary, I also want to sleep in your Immaculate Heart to call all souls into that safe refuge. And to give You the contentment that would be yours if all did enter that safe refuge and live their consecration in littleness, trust and abandonment, preparing them to receive from You the inheritance of the Kingdom of the Divine Will.

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(Vol. 13: December 23, 1921)

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END NOTES

[2] See Chapter 9, No. 2.

[4] "poverty of your heart": St. Peter Julian Eymard tells us: "...remember, that our good Master prefers the poverty of our heart to the most sublime thoughts and affections borrowed from others. You can be sure that our Lord wants our heart and not that of someone else. He wants the thought and prayer of that heart as a genuine expression of its love for Him." (St. Peter Julian Eymard, *The Real Presence*, pp. 164-5. Cleveland, OH: Emanuel Publications.)

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